



AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. **(currently amended)** A container for holding items to be microbially deactivated in a reprocessor, comprised of:

a generally cup-shaped tray having a bottom wall and a continuous side wall extending to one side from the periphery of said bottom wall, said bottom wall and said side wall defining a cavity for receiving instruments and items to be microbially deactivated;

a lid attachable to said tray, said lid dimensioned to cover said cavity;

a fluid inlet in said tray communicating with said cavity; and

a fluid outlet in said tray communicating with said cavity, said fluid inlet and said fluid outlet each having a flexible valve [[means]] element having that is movable by a mechanical actuator on said reprocessor between an open position to allow fluid flow through said container during a deactivation cycle[[;]] and a closed position sealing said cavity.

2. **(currently amended)** A container as defined in claim 1, wherein said valve [[means]] elements ~~is disposed in~~ are attached to said tray.

3. **(currently amended)** A container as defined in claim 2, wherein each of said valve [[means]] elements has a normally closed position.

4. **(currently amended)** A container as defined in claim 3, wherein each of said valve ~~[[means]]~~ elements is movable by an actuator element on said reprocessor, wherein said valve ~~[[means]]~~ element is in said open position when said container is disposed within said reprocessor.

5. **(currently amended)** A container as defined in claim 1, wherein each of said valve ~~means includes~~ elements is formed of a resilient flexible ~~valve element~~ material.

6. **(currently amended)** A container as defined in claim 1, wherein said ~~valve means is comprised of~~ tray includes three (3) flexible valve elements, each of which is independently movable between an open position and a closed position to open and close an associated opening in said tray.

7. **(currently amended)** A container for holding items to be microbially deactivated in a reprocessor, having:

a tray for holding said items to be deactivated;

a lid operable to cover said tray and to define an interior, sealed cavity that holds said items to be deactivated;

a fluid inlet passage into said cavity; ~~[[and]]~~

a fluid outlet passage into said cavity; and

at least one valve assembly on said tray associated with each of said passages ~~into~~
~~said cavity~~, said valve assembly including a valve element that is movable through contact with
an actuator on said reprocessor between an open position and a closed position, said valve
element being ~~[[in]]~~ movable to said open position when said container is ~~disposed~~ placed within
said reprocessor and ~~being in~~ moving to said closed position when said container is removed
from said reprocessor.

8. **(original)** A container as defined in claim 7, wherein said valve assembly is
movable by an actuator element on said reprocessor.

9. **(original)** A container as defined in claim 7, wherein said valve assembly
includes a flexible valve element having a normally closed position.

10. **(original)** A container as defined in claim 9, wherein said normally closed valve
element is movable to said open position by an external actuator on said reprocessor when said
container is set in said reprocessor.

11. **(original)** A container as defined in claim 10, wherein said container includes at
least two passages into said container and a valve assembly associated with each passage, one of
said passages being a fluid inlet and the other being a fluid outlet.

12. **(currently amended)** A system for microbially deactivating items, comprising:

a circulation system for circulating a microbial decontamination fluid through a deactivation chamber that forms a part of said circulation system;

a container for holding items to be deactivated having a sealable cavity in which said items to be deactivated may be placed, said container having a fluid inlet and a fluid outlet, each having at least one a flexible valve element that is movable between an open and a closed position to regulate fluid flow into and out of said cavity; and

an actuator in said deactivation chamber associated with each valve element operable to move said valve element to an open position when said container is disposed within said deactivation chamber, wherein the cavity within said container is in fluid communication with said circulation system when said valve elements ~~[[is]]~~ are in said open position.

13. **(original)** A system as defined in claim 12, wherein

said circulation system includes a first fluid inlet line and a fluid outlet line that communicates with said deactivation chamber; and

said container includes a first fluid inlet port and a fluid outlet port that communicates respectively with said first fluid inlet line and said fluid outlet line of said circulation system when said container is disposed within said deactivation chamber.

14. **(canceled)**

15. **(canceled)**

16. **(currently amended)** A system as defined in claim ~~[[15]]~~12, wherein each actuator physically contacts a valve element and moves said valve element to said open position when said container is placed in said deactivation chamber.

17. **(currently amended)** A system as defined in claim ~~[[15]]~~16, wherein said actuators are movable relative to said deactivation chamber.

18. **(original)** A system as defined in claim 17, wherein said deactivation chamber is defined by a housing panel and said actuators are mounted to said panel to allow limited motion of said actuators relative to said panel.

19. **(original)** A system as defined in claim 12, wherein said microbial decontamination fluid is a liquid solution.

20. **(original)** A system as defined in claim 12, wherein said circulation system is essentially closed loop and said microbial decontamination fluid is circulated through said closed loop.

21. **(new)** A container as defined in claims 1 or 7, further comprising a second fluid inlet having a flexible valve element that is movable between an open position and a closed position through contact with a mechanical actuator on a reprocessor.

22. **(new)** A container as defined in claim 21, wherein one of said fluid inlets is in fluid communication with a nozzle within said container.

23. **(new)** A container as defined in claim 21, wherein one of said fluid inlets is in fluid communication with fluid connectors connectable with medical instruments in said container.

24. **(new)** A container as defined in claim 21, wherein one of said fluid inlets is in fluid communication with a seal defined between said tray and said lid.